



Cast of 'The Dinner Party'

1

Canary Yellow Has a Dinner Party with the Help of ScreenACT

Securing finance for small business is always problematic, but for those engaged in artistic endeavours such as film, many projects do not get close to going ahead without it.

'**The Dinner Party**', a film produced by Canberra producer and actor Brendan Sloane of **Canary Yellow Pty Ltd** is now negotiating distribution arrangements following production and post production, in part made possible with the help of **ScreenACT**.

Sloane has produced the film with limited resources backed by some Canberra business interests—a deal, he says, which would not have been possible without the indication of some prior funding from ScreenACT.

ScreenACT, the ACT's Office of Film, Television and Digital Media, is funded by the ACT Government via the Business and Industry Development Branch of the Chief Minister's Department and administered by the Canberra Business Council.





Monica Penders, ScreenACT Manager



Monica Penders, Manager of **ScreenACT**, says it is an innovative move by the ACT Government—the first time an Australian state or territory film office has been run by industry for industry.

It is run in consultation with an advisory committee of industry representatives (the ScreenACT Task Force).

‘The project is managed with a regional focus to support local industry development and capability, promote the region as a filming destination, and provide location facilitation for visiting productions,’ said Monica.

With initiatives on offer such as professional development opportunities and project funding grants, **ScreenACT** has been well received by both local industry and the various state and national film funding organisations during its two years of operation.

‘**The Dinner Party**’ received a grant in the first round of funding along with four other projects which included a TV movie, documentaries and a video game.

The third round of the project fund has been recently announced with the deadline being 18 September 2009.

Sloane’s company was part of a Canberra team which struggled to raise the money to finish ‘**The Dinner Party**’, a film loosely inspired by the shocking Canberra murder case documented in Helen Garner’s book ‘The Consolation of Joe Cinque’.

Sloane and his colleagues are among hundreds of budding Canberra artistic producers, many filmmakers, who work with little money or encouragement to make their films.

They then often have to do so with extremely limited resources.

‘It is hard work trying to get support and you have to start somewhere—it’s not an easy way to get rich. But certainly a means of telling a story you want told,’ said Brendan.

‘The support from **ScreenACT** backed by the ACT Government helped me persuade prominent Canberra

The Dinner Party

BRENDAN SLOANE
PRODUCER





business people to provide substantial funding, which on top of my own commitment financially, enabled “**The Dinner Party**” to go ahead.

‘It is these sorts of initiatives from government which enable creative people in Canberra like me to take our artistic products to market—and just as importantly project our culture and artistic environment,’ he said.

‘Seeing local producers like **Canary Yellow** completing their projects and having them ready for distribution is exactly the outcome that **ScreenACT** seeks to achieve,’ said Monica Penders.

‘**ScreenACT** is about supporting serious projects that have a high chance of being produced and distributed and therefore having an economic impact on the region.’

The film has already begun to attract widespread attention with official selection at the 2009 Dungog Film Festival and the Melbourne Underground Film Festival.

About ‘The Dinner Party’

‘**The Dinner Party**’ involves a hostess who plans to kill her boyfriend with a drug overdose. All the guests know of the plan.

The producers do not say it is absolutely based on the Canberra murder of Joe Cinque but more on an idea that comes from a number of sources.

Brenda Sloane says it is about a girl who is not quite with it and holds the dinner party on the premise that she and her partner are going to kill themselves afterwards.

‘Basically the film was born from a passion and a need to push our idea of what we think, I guess, about society and what we in specific don’t like about society,’ he said.

Actor in the film, Kai Harris, says it is about six different people who know each other because they all go to the same university and all go to a dinner party.

‘While aware something is going to happen there they all have different reasons for going.

‘Not everyone will like this film. This film’s controversial, it’s dark, it’s confronting, and it raises issues that you don’t really want to think about.

‘It puts you in a situation that you’d hope you’d never really be in, and how would you react?’ said Harris.

‘It is not really a film you go to enjoy. It’s more a film you go to sort of have a really heated debate with your friends afterwards, which is, from the test screenings we’ve been doing, happening afterwards,’ said Brendan.

‘Having made it with lots of help we are now negotiating with a distributor who wants to push it to cinema at the end of year. So we’ll be keenly pushing that ‘cause I believe it’s a film that is best shown in a big, dark cinema. It has a lot of impact,’ he said.

